

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

1. ABNORMAL BEHAVIOUR OF A MALE RHESUS MONKEY (*MACACA MULATTA MULATTA* ZIMMERMANN)

A family of the common Rhesus monkey consisting of an overlord, about a dozen females, young ones, and an adult male attracts the attention of many a passer-by in the Calcutta Maidan. The chief centre of interest is the peculiar behaviour of the adult male who, despite his age, is being tolerated by the overlord. Judging from his size, the animal appears to be fully adult, differing from the overlord only in his slender build; but his habits are entirely different. The overlord, as usual, is much dreaded by the members of the family; and except for the occasional sexual acts and the protection against intruders he takes no interest in the family life, generally confining himself to seclusion. The male under report, on the other hand, shows no sexual tendencies and mixes freely with the family. If a female is found lacking in devotion to her baby, he at once snatches it away from her, puts it under his breast in the usual way, and walks away. Knowing the affection which will be accorded to it, the baby eagerly accepts his embrace. Sometimes he forcibly takes away a baby from its mother; at other times, tired of the naughty habits of her charge, the mother herself hands it over to him. In this way he is frequently found fondly playing with the babies, passionately caressing and kissing them, and even trying to suckle them by putting his teats in their mouths. In short, his habits are more or less like those of a mother monkey.

Such feminine behaviour on the part of a male is evidently due to some unbalance of the sex hormones, the estrogen and the androgen. This is also attested by the fact that the skin of the anal and the urinogenital regions has failed to develop the normal red colour.

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H. KHAJURIA

2. TIGER EATING CARRION

At the end of April 1932, I went one afternoon to fish in the Paba River. When I arrived there I saw the Miri village cattle stampeding and an old Miri came along at the end, and told me that a tiger had caught a bull. I asked him to have a machan built, whilst I returned to fetch my rifle.

On coming back, he informed me that an Abor who had been downstream, on returning saw the tiger on the bull and managed to drive the tiger away. The bull got up and struggled back to the village, but died three days later.

The owner buried the carcass where it died, about thirty yards from an old house, of which only the 'chang' was left.

The next morning the headman of the village came and told me that the tiger had dug up the carcass and eaten a portion. As I had never heard of a tiger doing this before, I went along to have a look; it had rained during the night and I found the pug marks of the tiger quite distinct and part of the body exposed and partly eaten. I had it covered up again.

At 7 p.m. I sat up on the 'chang' referred to. It was dark as a storm was coming up. At 7.10 p.m. I thought I saw something and flashed my torch light and there was the tiger by the spot where the bull was buried. I shot it and found it in good condition of 8 ft. 9 in. between pegs.

The tiger could have quite easily killed any other of the village herd as they were all let loose during the three days, but none was attacked.

MURKONG SELEK P.O.,

ASSAM,

July 12, 1951.

F. M. NEEDHAM

[On p. 587 of the *Oriental Sporting Magazine* for 1873 Col. Douglas Hamilton writes—

'The common idea that tigers will only eat animals killed by themselves is a complete fallacy . . . they always prefer putrid to fresh meat. I have often killed a bison and left him untouched in the forest; as long as he was fresh, the tigers, although they would come and walk around him, would never touch him. The moment the bison became putrid the tigers would gorge themselves and never leave off eating, if undisturbed, until the whole was consumed.'

Since then the propensity of tigers for carrion has been frequently recorded and is now well known. Some instances will be found in editorial comments on a note entitled 'Tiger preferring Carrion to live Bait' on p. 1025 of Vol. 31 of the *Journal*.—EDS.]

3. 'AN EXTRAORDINARY FIND IN A PANTHER'S STOMACH'

I think there is only one possible explanation for the pointed wooden stake found in the panther's stomach, as described in Miscellaneous Note No. 2. in your journal Vol 49 (4) p. 775.

Your sketch and description of the stake might well be that of a similar stake I found sticking in the lower part of the chest of a bull bison I shot years ago. My trackers recognized what had happened without any hesitation. The bison, entering cultivation at the foot of the hills, had jumped on to a pointed stake deliberately placed inside an inviting gap in the hedge. Such stakes are, of course, intended for deer and pig, not bison; and the stake must have snapped under the bison's weight.

The panther must have either killed an animal that had similarly impaled itself previously; or had come on the impaled animal *in situ*,